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A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

Anniversary Meeting

Of the SONS of

CLERGY-MEN

In the Church of

St Mary-le-Bow,

ON

Thursday, December the 7th. 1693.

Printed at the Request of the Stewards of the Feast; to whom it is humbly Presented.

By *EDWARD LAKE*, D. D. Rector of the United Parishes of St. *Mary at Hill*, and St. *Andrew Hubbard*.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. Leake* for *Henry Bonwicke*, at the *Red Lyon* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1694.

Dr. *LAKE*'s

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Before the *Sons* of the

CLERGY.

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HEBREWS xiij. 7.

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have ſpoken to you the word of God: whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation.

WE do not doubt to aſſert this Epiſtle Canonical Scripture, and aſſign it to St. *Paul*, as the *Amanuenſis* or Pen-man of it; though controverted of old by *Marcion*, and the *Arians* in Oppoſition to the Divinity of *Chriſt*, herein plainly evinced; and by *Cajetan* of late. St. *Peter*'s Intimation in his Second Epiſtle, an Epiſtle written Six Years after this, does, methinks, put it quite out of doubt: *Our beloved Brother Paul alſo, according to the Wiſdom given* 2 Pet. 3. 15.

unto

unto him, hath written to you, viz. To you
1 Pet. 1. 1. Jews, *then Strangers ſcattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia and Bithynia:* For we know of no other Epiſtle but this, directed by our Apoſtle to them. If any will not reſt ſatisfied with this, let him look upon the *token*
2 Theſ. 3. 17. *or ſeal,* which he ſets to every Epiſtle, as he did to this, *viz. The Grace of Jeſus Chriſt*; whereas the *Jews* did uſually conclude their
1 Pet. 5. 14. 3 Joh. 14. Addreſſes with a Valediction of Peace, as did St. *Peter* and St. *John* afterward.

And though he prefixes not his Name to it, as he did to the reſt of his Epiſtles, for ſome good Reaſons, which would take up too much of your Time and Patience to hear; yet the Sentences thereof ſo grave and weighty, and expreſſive, breath the Spirit and Majeſty of this Apoſtle. Add hereunto the Proſecution of his Deſign herein, which renders it highly probable; for, according to his wonted Method, he firſt lays the Doctrine of Faith as a Foundation, and upon it raiſes Precepts of good Manners, and Directions to an holy Life, as the Building. And as by Faith, we are united to our Head *Chriſt Jeſus*; ſo by Love we are knit together, and united among our ſelves; therefore to the Doctrine of Faith, treated of

at

at large in the Twelve Firſt Chapters, he does immediately ſubjoin an Exhortation to brotherly Love in the beginning of this, ſpecifying two ſorts of Perſons, to whom more eſpecially we are obliged to direct it, *viz. Strangers and Captives.* Strangers driven from their Homes, and forced to take up Deſarts, Dens, and Caves for their Habitation; Captives, who were houſed indeed, but to their greater Affliction, detained in their Bonds and Priſon for their Profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

This Profeſſion he doth very earneſtly exhort them in this Epiſtle, *to hold faſt without wavering,* maugre thoſe grievous Perſecutions, which from *Jews* and *Gentiles* did now preſs hard upon them on every ſide; *to give earneſt heed to the things which they had heard; to hold faſt the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end; not to be of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe, to the ſaving of the ſoul.* Laſtly, *Not to be ſlothful, but to be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.* The very Argument which my Text offers, *Remember them,* &c.

Heb. 10. 23. 2. 1. 3. 6. 10. 39. 6. 12.

The Perſons mentioned therein are preſented with a double Character, they are ſuch as rule over them, and have ſpoken to them the Word of

of God: The Duties which referr to them are two; they muſt remember and imitate them; and this in two things here particularly taken Notice of, as 1. Their Faith. 2. Their Perſeverance and Conſtancy, even to the end of their Converſation. I will (by God's Help) very plainly, and expeditely ſpeak to theſe particulars, and then give them a Review, and adapt the whole to the Deſign of our preſent Solemnity.

And for the better underſtanding of what I have to ſay, I premiſe,

1. That the Apoſtle cannot be ſuppoſed to mean here, thoſe who were then living, but who had been for ſome time deceaſed. It is true, we read it in the preſent Tenſe, thoſe who have the Rule; but the Word Ἡγουμένων, may be well rendred in a paſt one, as will appear by comparing it with the following Words, and *have ſpoken to you the Word of God*, and the Apoſtle calls on them to *remember them*, which ſuppoſes them abſent from them, *viz.* in the Body, and preſent with the Lord; as alſo to conſider the End of their Converſation, Ἔκβασιν, *i. e.* their Deceaſe, their Exit, or Departure out of the World.

2. This was the laſt of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, and written by him, as 'tis gueſs'd, about the Eighth

Eighth Year of the Emperour *Nero*, and preſently after *Timothy*'s Enlargement from Priſon: After which, we hear no more of our Apoſtle; nothing indeed of him but Conjecture. So that before the writing of this Epiſtle, not only St. *Stephen* the Protomartyr, but St. *James* the Great, the Brother of *John*; and alſo very probably, St. *James* the Leſs, the Brother of our Lord, and Conſtituted by him Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, were put to Death; and perhaps ſome others, whom neither Holy Scriptures, nor Eccleſiaſtical Writings, give us any Account of. Only *Baronius* out of *Doſitheus*, tells us of *Silas*, *Narciſſus*, and others, whoſe Memories the *Hebrews* were obliged to Regard and Preſerve, whoſe Faith to Follow, whoſe Converſations to Imitate. And,

1. Them who rule over you, *viz.* chiefly and principally the Biſhops; as alſo, though in an inferiour Sence, *Presbyters:* For thus, both among Prophane and Sacred Authors, the Word imports Prefects or Governours, whether in Church or State.

We find the Title Applied to Chriſt as Ruler or Governour in *Iſrael*; to his Apoſtles, Ἡγούμενος ὡς ὁ διακονῶν, *Let him that is chief*, or *who ruleth among you, be as he that doth ſerve*; Mat. 2. 7. Luk. 22. 26.

Act. 15. 22. and particularly to *Silas and Judas, Chief men or rulers among the people.*

This Notion of the Word we have from the laſt Words of this Chapter and Epiſtle; *Salute all them that have the rule over you*, viz. the Biſhops and Paſtors of your Churches, (for ſuch there were, at this time, conſtituted over the Churches of the believing Jews, eſpecially in *Syria* and *Judæa*) and all the Saints, *viz.* the Flock committed to their charge: Rulers and Saints being the Two Words made uſe of to comprehend all the Chriſtian *Hebrews*, to whom this Epiſtle is directed.

Mede on 1 Tim. 5. 17. *pag.* 71. If Mr. *Mede*'s Thought be right in his Expoſition of that Text of the Apoſtle, *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, and eſpecially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine*; where he diſtinguiſhes Two ſort of Elders, *viz.* Reſidentiaries, and ſuch as were affixed to certain Churches, whoſe buſineſs was *præſidere gregi*, to govern and Inſtruct their Flocks, who are elſewhere called Prophets and Doctors; and others who had no fixed Station or Charge over any certain Church, but travelled up and down to Preach the Goſpel where it was not, and to Eſtabliſh it where it was. Their Dioceſs was the whole World,

World, as it was St. *Paul's*; ἐκοπίασα, ſaith he, *I have laboured*, or, *I have travelled up and down more than they all*; and they are elſewhere known by the Name of Evangeliſts: I ſay, If this Obſervation be genuine, why may not we too diſtinguiſh in my Text, thoſe that ruled well among the *Hebrews*, from others who had ſpoken to them the Word of God? Heb. 13. 10.

The Firſt of theſe, under what Name ſoever they paſs among Divines, whether we call them Miniſters of the Word, or Apoſtles, or Governours, or Paſtors, or Doctors, or Conductors and Guides of Faith, or High-Prieſts, or Prelates and Biſhops of the Church, this is obvious, that their Work is to rule over, and govern their Flocks.

What Society can ſubſiſt without Order, without Government? This is the very Soul that animates and influences it: Neither Church nor Kingdom can live and breath without it.

Look over the ſeveral Appellations given to our Lord in Holy Scripture, as Lord, Shepherd, King, Husband, the Head of his Church, and do they not all imply a Precedence or Authority? Read over the Titles with which he hath grac'd his beloved Church, ſtiling her

his Body, his Spouſe, his Flock, his Houſhold or Family, and do they not all import an orderly and regular Submiſſion?

But Chriſt hath now left the World, and aſcended up on high; and when he did ſo,
Eph. 4. 11. he gave Gifts unto Men; *He gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtery, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt.* And thus particularly did he authorize his Apoſtles, this Commiſſion did he give them, and in them their Succeſſors, not only to ſpeak the Word of God unto his Saints, but to rule over them; a Power really communicated to them, with other Gifts and Graces, on the Day of *Pen-*
Act. 1. 4. *tecoſt: Ye ſhall receive power after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you*; a Power which hath been ever ſince exerciſed in the Church of Chriſt, by Chriſtian Biſhops and Prieſts, but with reſpect to their different Station and Order.

Aaron of Old, had, you know, his Rod,
Num. 17. 8. as the Biſhop his Paſtoral Staff, an Emblem of Authority, an Enſign of Juriſdiction, a Rod to ſupport the Weak and Innocent, to chaſtiſe the Wicked and Impenitent, to mete out

out Reward and Puniſhment reſpectively unto all. This Rod of his St. *Auſtin* calls *Sacramentum Sacerdotale*, and *Iſidore Peluſiote*, ἱερατύλης ὑπόθεσιν, the Type of the Prieſthood, a ſignificant Hieroglyphick of his Duty.

It inſtructs him to be courageous and vigilant in his Office, and to Rebuke with all Authority, to Admoniſh, to Reprove, and that with Sharpneſs too, as occaſion offers, according to the Power which the Lord hath given to Edification, and not unto Deſtruction. And to reject thoſe Counſels and Reproofs, is to offer Violence to the Authority which God hath erected in his Church: In this caſe, *He that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not Man but God.* 1 Theſſ. 4. 8.

The higheſt Acts of this Authority are the admiſſion of Perſons to the Communion of the Church by Baptiſm, and excluding them from it by Excommunication: When Men once contemn Diſcipline, and deſpiſe Order, and become Refractary and Obſtinate, Reſolution and Severity, are then the proper Vertues of theſe Rulers, and Juſtice it ſelf is their Mercy; they muſt then with *David*, condeſcend to be *Door-keepers in the houſe of God*, to ſhut out all Prophaneneſs, and debar ſuch Offenders from invading her Communion and Offices, from hearing the Word of God ſpoken to them. This

This is the other Character of the Perſons recommended to our Remembrance and Imitation; who have ſpoken to you the Word of God, who have inſtructed you in the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, the proper Food and Nouriſhment of the Soul, with which his Sheep, his Lambs are fed; and by Virtue of which, they advance and grow up unto a full Stature in

Joh. 17. 3. *Chriſt Jeſus: This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.*

And this is a Work, that none is too great or too high for; for it is a Work of Charity, and Charity is the Work of Heaven; nay, of the higheſt and moſt eminent Charity, to give Alms to the Souls of Men, to cloath the Nakedneſs of their Underſtandings, and ſupply the Wants of their impoveriſhed Reaſon. And for this Purpoſe, hath God appointed and ſeparated an Order of Men, whoſe buſineſs ſhould be to devote themſelves to the Service of Religion, the Study of the Scriptures, and the Work of the Miniſtry; to inſtruct men in thoſe things they know not, to re-mind them of thoſe things they already know, to reprove them for what they do amiſs, to inſpect diligently the Lives and Manners of Men, to apply ſeaſonable

Encou-

Encouragements to fearful, and Comforts to diſtreſſed, Conſciences. This is indeed, ſpeaking the Word of God; it is not properly a flow of Words, nor the draining of an Hour-glaſs, but an effectual procuring that men be taught their Duty, and urged to the performance of it. And this is effected more particularly and publickly by Catechizing and Preaching.

As to Catechizing, you cannot but know the great import and Advantages of it; how neceſſary it is, that a good Foundation be firſt laid before a firm Superſtructure can be raiſed, how needful it is, that the firſt Principles ſhould be well underſtood before the greater myſteries can be throughly apprehended; What a moſt excellent Expedient it is to prevent Schiſm and Hereſy, Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs; What Benefits would hence accrue both to Church and State; I ſuppoſe it needleſs to enlarge on it in this knowing Aſſembly. Nor is this Office of Catechizing below the Dignity of the greateſt Miniſter of God: The Primitive Fathers generally were κατηχῦντες; nay, very probably the holy Apoſtles themſelves were ſo.

As to Preaching, 'tis a Duty too of infinite conſequence and advantage, even the Power of God unto Salvation, when rightly and plainly diſpen-

diſpenſed: I ſay, plainly, for what have the ignorant Vulgar to do with controverſy? Why ſhould their Heads be filled with perplexed Notions and fooliſh Queſtions which engender Strifes? Such things as are of daily Uſe and Practice, ſuch as are all earneſt and zealous Inculcations of Obedience to God, and to man for God's Sake, of Humility and Sobriety, of Love and Charity, of common Juſtice and Honeſty, of Faith and Repentance and good Works, *&c.* *If thou put them in remembrance of theſe things,* 1 Tim. 4. 6. *thou ſhalt be* καλὸς διάκονος, *a faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt*; and as ſuch, worthy hereafter to be remembred, which directs me to conſider the Duties here recommended to us, and, 1. Remember,

Men naturally deſire to be remembred tho' dead and gone, to have their Names perpetuated to after-Ages; nor has there been wanting among the Heathen, ſuch, who, tho' not inſpired with the Hopes of a future Reward, yet have taken care to have their memories conveyed to Poſterity. Witneſs the *Egyptian* Pyramids, as alſo certain Statues among the *Greeks*, with the Names of their Founders inſcribed on them. This they impetrated as a Favour from their Gods; this they accounted a Bleſſi g to have themſelves remembred after Death. And

And indeed ſo it is; for otherwiſe God would never have aſſured it to righteous men, That *they ſhould be had in everlaſting remembrance*, That *their righteouſneſs ſhould remain for ever*; *and their memories never periſh.* Our Saviour hath ſaid it of *Mary Magdalen*, That *whereſoever his Goſpel ſhould be preached, that which ſhe had done ſhould be ſpoken of for a memorial of her.* Whereas God hath threatned the Wicked with Exciſion, even of their very Names, that their memory ſhould periſh; or, if it did out-live them, it ſhould rot, and (as we ſay) ſtink above ground; or like *Lot*'s Wife's Pillar, which remained to Poſterity, a Spectacle of Divine Vengeance for many Generations; ſo that they who paſſed by wagged their Heads at it.

Pſal. 112.

Mat. 26. 13.

But the memory of the Juſt ſhall be bleſſed, *i. e.* ſo far as known; and God calls on us, who ſurvive them, to take care, that it be ſo. Remember them; recollect thoſe Gifts and Graces, with which God had ſo remarkably endowed them; Acknowledge to his Glory, what good they have done us; remember them as our ſpiritual Parents and Benefactours; as thoſe who laboured and watched for the good of our Souls; think of them with Delight, who have

put off their Fleſh, and are paſſed this Stage of ſin and ſorrow to their everlaſting Homes; ſpeak of them to their praiſe, for which God did ſo eminently qualify them.

This hath been the Practice of all Ages, even of ſuch as never heard of *Chriſt*. *Let us now praiſe famous Men*, (ſaid the wiſe *Syracides*) *and our fathers that begat us: The Lord hath wrought glory on them through his great Power from the beginning*; *ſuch as did bear Rule in their Kingdoms, men renowned for their Power*; *Leaders of the People: By their Counſels and by their Knowledge of Learning meet for the People*; *wiſe and eloquent in their Inſtructions.* Ecclus. 44. 1. And again, *All theſe were honoured in their Generations, and were the Glory of the times*; *There be of them that have left a Name behind them, that their Praiſes might be reported.* 7. v. And again, *Merciful men, whoſe righteouſneſs hath not been forgotten*; *Their ſeed ſhall remain for ever, and their glory ſhall not be blotted out.* 10. v. And again, *Their bodies are buried in Peace, but their Name liveth for evermore*; *The people will tell of their wiſdom, and the Congregation will ſhew forth their praiſe.* 13. v.

How very exact too were the Primitive Chriſtians, in honouring the memories of their Martyrs

Martyrs and deceaſed Biſhops? For this were the Diptychs read in the Church, which were two Leaves or Tables, on the one whereof were written the Names of thoſe pious Men and Confeſſors who were yet alive; and on the other thoſe who had died in the Lord, and were at reſt. For this were Altars erected over their Graves; For this were their Pictures hung up in their private Shops and Houſes; For this were Churches, though dedicated to God, made to bear the Names of Saints to preſerve their Memories; For this were their Feaſt-days celebrated, Panegyricks made on them, and their Lives written. St. *Baſil* wrote the Life of *Barlaam*, who was but a poor Shepherd; *Nazianzen*, of *Baſil* and others, which, he ſaith, he left to Poſterity, ὡς κοινὸν ἀρετῆς πινάκα, as a common Table of Virtue for all the World to look on.

We do not read of any Worſhip in thoſe times addreſſed to them (this were to diſhonour not only that God who crowned them, but themſelves alſo; for Honour, where it is not due, is a kind of contumely:) we do not read of any Prayers for them to be delivered out of Purgatory, nor of adoring their Reliques, nor of Proſtration to their Images, nor of Pilgrimages to their Shrines, nor of ſaying

Maſſes, nor of making Vows or Oblations unto them, as *Cornelius à Lapide*, and others, urge even from this very Text. No, they only prayed, as we doe, for a glorious Reſurrection, for their perfect Conſummation and Bliſs both in Body and Soul, in his eternal and everlaſting Kingdom. But the greateſt Honour which they did them, was to follow or imitate them; which is the ſecond Duty inculcated in the Text.

The very Remembrance of good men is a Degree, an Approach to Holineſs; otherwiſe St. *Paul* would not, as in our Text, have required it: as he did in another place of this Epiſtle call upon his *Hebrews*, *to conſider*, κατανοεῖν, narrowly to mark and obſerve, and ſtudy one another, εἰς παροξυσμὸν, to whet and ſharpen each others Affections, now, perhaps, dull'd with vain and impertinent Speculations, *to provoke unto love and to good works.*

Heb. 10. 24.

By Virtue of this Imitation it is, that we become influenced, nay, ecſtaſied with the Spirits of thoſe who are gone before us; that we become meek with *Moſes*, patient with *Job*, chaſt with *Joſeph*, devout with *David*, that with our Apoſtle, *we forget thoſe things which are behind, and preſs forward to thoſe things which*

Phil. 3. 13.

are

are before; that with him *we are ready to be offered up*; yea, are at the Stake, or on the Rack, or at the Block with the Holy Martyrs. Thus when in the courſe of Chriſtianity we doubt or diſpute with our ſelves which way to take, we then deliberate and adviſe, what Paths they trod, who have already departed this Life in the Faith and Fear of God, and eſpecially they who have had the rule over us, Holy Biſhops, or our good Fathers; wou'd they have turned their Backs in the Day of Battel, and been Cowards at the ſight of a glittering Spear? Would they have ſtruck Sail at every Pyrate's Threat? Would they have baſely and unworthily betray'd their Holy Faith? With what Courage, with what Reſolution, with what Patience were they Endow'd? 2 Tim. 4. 6.

And indeed, as I intimated e'en now, this is the higheſt Honour we can do them, to propound them to our ſelves as our Patterns, and to follow them in their conſtant Love to God, to Religion, and to all Mankind, whatſoever we ſuffer for it.

This was the due Practice of Holy Men of Old; *Laudamus*, *Glorificamus*, *Admiramur*, &c. (to uſe the Words of St. *Auſtin*, or whoever he

he was that wrote the Book *de Excidio urbis*) We Praiſe, we Glorify, we Admire the Bleſſed Martyrs, we Celebrate their Days with a pious Solemnity, we Venerate their Worth, and, as far as we can, we Follow them, and endeavour to do as they did.

By this we raiſe them as 'twere, from the Dead to Life again, we revive their Memories, we perſonate them in this World, and act their Parts: Our Actions are the Reſultances of theirs, our Praiſes the Echo's of their Songs, and our Selves the living Images of them. And thoſe, who do thus Honour God's Saints and Friends, God himſelf will Honour everlaſtingly.

Here are Two Graces expreſs'd in the Text, in which eſpecially we are obliged to follow them. 1. Their Faith. 2. Their Perſeverance and Conſtancy even unto the end of their Converſation.

As to Faith, we here underſtand by it, the Grace rather than the Rule of Faith; and by it, we mean a conſtant Dependance upon God for the Performance of his Promiſes; a being convinc'd of the truth of thoſe things, of which we have no ocular or ſenſible Demonſtration. We have an Account of it thus under-

underſtood throughout the whole Eleventh Chapter of this Epiſtle, and of thoſe brave Exploits, which by Virtue hereof, the Fathers of the *Old Teſtament* had wrought, and therefore *obtained a good report*, viz. a Teſtimony of God's Approbation of, and Reſpect unto them.

But here, as the Apoſtle ſpake in the Cloſe of that Chapter, *The time would fail me to ſpeak of Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, and Moſes, and thoſe other Worthies; who through Faith, ſubdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteouſneſs, obtained Promiſes*, &c. Heb. 11. 32.

And no leſs Eminent for this Grace, were thoſe Holy Men under the *New Teſtament*, whoſe Faith theſe *Hebrews* here are bid to follow; whom they had obſerv'd depending on God's Strength and Bleſſing, conſtantly and fearleſsly diſcharging their Duties. And though there were as yet but few, but Three or Four of them that we know of, beſide private Chriſtians; not ſuch a Cloud as was under the Jewiſh Oeconomy; yet they ought to *lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet them, and to run with patience the race which was ſet before them; Looking unto Jeſus,* Heb. 12. 2.

Jeſus, as alſo unto thoſe, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes, conſidering the end of their Converſation.

Intuentes, Looking upon ſeriouſly, and diligently, again and again, their Ἔκβασιν, their *Exit* or Cataſtrophe, their End or going out of the World. Revolve with your ſelves, how holily they adorn'd their Faith, how conſtantly they perſevered in the Profeſſion of it, how gloriouſly they atteſted and ſigned it with their Blood! Faithfull they were unto Death, or, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* expreſſeth it, μέχρι ἀναπνοῆς, to the very laſt Gaſp; as they did *run* Rev. 2. 10. *the race ſet before them*, ſo they did it δι' ὑπομονῆς, with Patience and Perſeverance.

Nor ſhall the Crown of Heaven be conſign'd to thoſe that contend, but to thoſe that overcome; St. *Paul* himſelf, that noble Champion of Chriſtianity, Triumpheth not when he put on his Armour, but when about to put it off; He knew there is laid up for him a Crown of Righteouſneſs, but *de reliquo*, henceforth only, when he was now a Veterane in the Chriſtian Warfare, had already worn out a long Life, and had nothing now to do, but to die in it. He was ready, prepared, not only to be bound, (as the Sacrifices under the Law

Law were wont) *but to die for the Name of the Lord Jeſus:* And he is moſt unworthy of that high and honourable Name, who will not take up the moſt painfull and ignominious Croſs, which weareth upon it, the Inſcription of *JESUS of NAZARETH:* Jeſus, who hath ever wrought in his own, *both to will and to do*, and to ſuffer too for doing well; who, as he hath ever ſupported them under whatever Sufferings they have at any time labour'd, ſo will continue to do ſo; for he is Yeſterday, to Day, and the ſame for ever. Acts 21. 13.

And now paſſing from my Text as it lies in it ſelf, unto the Application of it unto this preſent Solemnity, I will introduce it with thoſe Words of St. *Peter* to the *Jews*, with a little Variation; *Men, Fathers, and Brethren, Let me freely ſpeak unto you, not of the Patriarch David, but of your own Progenitors, your Parents both in the Fleſh and in Chriſt too, your Spiritual as well as your natural ones, who have had the rule over you, who have ſpoken to you the word of God, who, many, moſt of them, are dead and buried, and their ſepulchres are with us unto this day:* But withall, with their Characters and Inſcriptions, their good Inſtructions and Examples, which we ſhould endeavour to Tranſcribe and Copy Act. 2. 26.

out in our own Converſations: For *Solomon* is therefore Commended, that he walked in the Steps of his Father *David.*

I am willing to believe this of the Parents of us all here preſent, That they took Care to have us Nurs'd up and Imbib'd with early Sentiments of Religion; to have our Minds, before they could be filled with Vanity, infus'd with the Knowledge of God and of Chriſt; to have our Wills, whilſt they were yet flexible, form'd to the Love of Vertue and Piety, that it is in a manner become natural to you. Ye are the Children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant which God made with your Fathers; of ſuch Fathers, who have not only with the moſt tender and affectionate Words that Love could dictate, directed you in the Ways of Holineſs, but walked before you in thoſe Ways; who have not only by Admonitions ſhew'd it to be moſt rational, but alſo by their conſtant Practice, evidenc'd it to be moſt Pleaſant and Delightfull.

Unto whom then can the Duties in my Text be more properly applied? How can we chuſe but remember and follow them, our venerable Guides? Revolve with our ſelves their grave Advices, their remarkable Sayings, and their wiſe

wiſe and worthy Actions, remember with what good Admonitions and Inſtructions they purſu'd and preſs'd you from time to time, and particularly when they emancipated, and diſcharg'd you out of their Government into the World, and to the Practice of thoſe Profeſſions and Conditions of Life you are now advanc'd to.

So that now Wickedneſs in us is a direct Reproach unto them; all Sin and Iniquity in us a manifeſt Scorn and Contempt of their Sanctity, as if it had been nothing elſe but a fooliſh Strictneſs of thoſe who underſtood not their own Liberty. O let not us then diſparage our Extraction! Let us not degenerate from the Credit and Honour of it! But *Let our light ſo ſhine before men,* Matt. 5. 16. *that they ſeeing thoſe good works,* with which we adorn our Original, may be induc'd to *Glorify God our Heavenly Father,* nay, our Earthly Fathers too, who are now in Heaven. Let us adhere to that Faith which they own'd, ſome of them with the loſs of their Liberty, their Eſtates, and perhaps too their Lives; Malign'd, Perſecuted for their Loyalty to the beſt of Kings; Drag'd from their Homes into Gaols and Priſons, there

to Languiſh through the Cruelty of the Malevolent and Implacable Round-head.

Si deeſt tyrannus, ſi ſpoliator, &c. (as St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks) though there be no Tryrant (bleſſed be God for it!) no Sequeſtrator, no Plunderer abroad; yet, foraſmuch as our Religion is a ſuffering Religion; and we, of all others, are taught, upon Occaſion, to exert a Paſſive Obedience, that noble, that heroic, that peculiar Doctrine and Glory too of our Church, let us all be reſolved, and prepared to do ſo, whenever God ſhall call us thereunto, and by ſo doing follow their Faith conſidering the end of their Converſation.

Laſtly, Becauſe Faith without Works is dead, or, no Faith at all, let us proceed, and add unto it Brotherly-kindneſs, and unto Brotherly-kindneſs Charity. Above all things put on Charity; nay, let it influence our minds, and excite us to that Beneficence, which both the Hopes and Neceſſities of our poor Brethren exact from us.

And here I muſt crave Leave to beg a rais'd Attention (though it has been tired ſufficiently;) for Time commands me to crowd my Materials into a narrow Compaſs.

My

My Brethren, we are met together this Day in an Holy Aſſembly, upon a Deſign of relieving thoſe of the ſame Deſcent with our ſelves, thoſe I mean, who do now mourn in ſecret, and dwell in the low Tabernacles of Smoak and deſolate Want; who themſelves alſo would have made a part of this Solemnity, had not God in his Providence diſpos'd them to a ſadder Entertainment. Remember the Fatherleſs and Widows, whoſe Cries come up to Heaven, even now whilſt we are paying our Devotions towards it; who ſuſtain the Neceſſities and Hardſhips, the Cold and Hunger of the whole Year, upon the Hopes of being comforted by the Bounty and Charity, which this Day may, through God's Grace, Occaſion.

To you therefore, who have acquired Eſtates by God's Bleſſing, whether on your own, or the Induſtry of your Anceſtors; To you, in what State or Condition you are, in the Church, or in the State, in the City or in the Country, in the Court or in the Camp, on the Bench or at the Bar, I addreſs my ſelf indifferently to you all, I charge and exhort, I adjure and obteſt you by the Bowels of *Chriſt*, by your Sacred Charter, by whatever other Obligation,

in

in the Words of the Apoſtle, *to do good, to be rich in good Works, to be ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate.*

Remember, That Charity is ſo great a Duty, that it renders men like God himſelf, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not; like his Son and our Saviour, who went about doing good; this brought him down from Heaven, this nailed him to the Croſs: That 'tis the only means we have, by which, as we are able, we can make Returns to God for what we are and have. By this means, we increaſe our Eſtates on Earth, and lay up Treaſures in Heaven.

Plead not the Number of your Children or Dependants; ſay not, as the wiſe ſaid to the fooliſh Virgins, *we have not enough for us and you*; but know, that God will provide for and bleſs your Off-ſpring, how numerous ſoever; and you'll oblige him to take Care of them by your continued Charities, to thoſe eſpecially who are of the Houſhold of Faith, of the ſame Extraction with your ſelves; for ſuch are the Sacrifices under the Goſpel, and with ſuch God is well pleaſed.

I have done, adding only thoſe Words of
Neh. 8.10. *Nehemiah*, or rather *Ezra*, *Go your way, eat the fat,*

fat, and drink the ſweet, and ſend portions to them for whom nothing is prepared: And then, as it follows, *This day ſhall be holy unto our Lord, neither ſhall ye be ſorry, for the Joy of the Lord will be your Strength.*

FINIS.